

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2627

USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1221

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 1082

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XV, US

SUBJECT: UNSC DEBATE ON MIDDLE EAST

REF: A) STATE 010929

B) MEXICO 0922

SUMMARY: IN RESPONDING TO EMBOFF REMARKS ON PITFALLS OF SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON MIDEAST, SENIOR FONSEC OFFICER IN CHARGE OF 10 AFFAIRS ARGUED THAT PALESTINIAN PROBLEM (COMPOUNDED BY FOREIGN INTERVENTION) WAS ROOT CAUSE OF THAT SITUATION AND THAT UNSC WAS MOST PROMISING FORUM FOR DEALING WITH IT AT PRESENT. IN MEXICO'S VIEW, HE SAID, ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS TO SOLUTION WERE (A) ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND (B) RECOGNITION OF TERRITORIAL RIGHTS OF PALESTINIAN "NATION". END SUMMARY.

1. IN ACCORDANCE WITH REFTTEL (A), EMBOFF JAN 25 CONVEYED USG HOPES AND CONCERNS WITH RESPECT TO CURRENT UNSC DEBATE ON MIDDLE EAST TO FONSEC DIRECTOR-IN-CHIEF FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION AFFAIRS, AMB SERGIO GONZALEZ GALVEZ. DRAWING UPON REFTTEL (A) TALKING POINTS, EMBOFF STRESSED IN PARTICULAR CONFIDENTIAL

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OUR WORRY THAT HEADLINE-HUNTING IN SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE

COULD SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE PROGRESS MADE IN LARGER CONTEXT OF GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS.

2. GONZALEZ GALVEZ REPLIED THAT MEXICO PLACED GREAT STOCK IN SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE, WHILE IT WAS LESS IMPRESSED WITH GENEVE PROGRESS. MEXICO HAD BEEN UNSWERVING IN ITS SUPPORT OF SC RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338, AS RECORD WOULD SHOW, BUT IT ALSO SHARED SENSE OF DECEMBER 5 UNGA REOLUTION AND BELIEVED THAT THREAT TO PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST WAS NOW SO GREAT THAT THOSE UNSC RESOLUTIONS NEEDED TO BE BUILT UPON.

3. SPECIFICALLY, GONZALEZ GALVEZ SAID, UNSC HAD TO COME TO GRIPS WITH SITUATION OF PALESTINIANS, WHICH MEXICO VIEWED AS NUB OF THE PROBLEM. IT WAS CLEAR TO MEXICO, HE SAID, THAT OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN LEBANON WAS OCCURRING (HE ALLEGED SUBSTANTIAL ISRAELI ARMS AID TO CHRISTIAN SIDE) PRECISELY BECAUSE OF UNASSIMILATED MASS OF PALESTINIANS, " AN ARMED ELEMENT SO STRONG THAT LEBANESE ARMY FEARED ATTEMPTING TO CONTROL THEM". ONLY ANSWER LAY IN GIVING MEANINGFUL RECOGNITION TO "NATIONAL RIGHTS" OF PALESTINIANS (HE WAS CAREFUL TO DISTINGUISH THESE FROM MERE REFUGEE INTERESTS) AND ACHIEVING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

4. GONZALEZ GALVEZ POINTED OUT THAT MEXICO HAD MADE THIS SAME CASE IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO SECURITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT JANUARY 10 (SUMMARIZED FROM PRESS REPORTS IN REF B). HE ADDED THAT, IN VIEW OF CONFUSION AND ADMITTED "SHIFTS" IN GOM POLICY TOWARD ZIONISM, MEXICO HAD DECIDED IT MUST MAKE ITS VIEWS CRYSTAL CLEAR IN THIS INSTANCE: IT HAD FIRST INTENDED TO PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN SC DEBATES, THEN OPTED INSTEAD FOR CAREFULLY-WORDED LETTER TO SC PRESIDENT.

5. GONZALEZ, TAKING PAINS TO UNDERSCORE WHAT MEXICO REGARDS AS KEY SECURITY COUNCIL ROLE, ALSO HANDED EMBOFF TEXT OF JANUARY 21 STATEMENT BY PRES ECHEVERRIA ALONG SIMILAR LINES. POINTING TO DANGERS OF OUTSIDE INTERVENTION IN LEBANON AND POTENTIAL FOR BROADENED CONFLICT, STATEMENT CALLS FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIANS' RIGHT TO FORM A STATE "ON THEIR OWN TERRITORY" AS ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR A JUST AND VIABLE SOLUTION; AND IT CALLS ON

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SECURITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT "IMMEDIATE AND CONSTRUCTIVE MEASURES PERMITTING EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF THE OTHER PEACE MECHANISMS ALREADY ESTABLISHED."

6. REVEALING HE HAD HEARD REPORTS THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD SOUGHT TO ARRANGE MEETING WITH YASSER ARAFAT OF PLO, USING SYRIAN PRESIDENT AS INTERMEDIARY, GONZALEZ GALVEZ ASKED WHETHER USG VIEWS OF PLO WERE NOT SOFTENING. WAS THE

U.S., HE ASKED, TENDING TOWARD THE SAME SHIFT MEXICO HAD MADE, I.E., TOWARD RECOGNIZING "NATIONAL" RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS AS OPPOSED TO TREATING THEM MERELY AS REFUGEES? EMBOFF REPLIED HE HAD NO SUCH INDICATION AND QUOTED DIRECTLY FROM DEPARTMENT REFTEL (PARA 6) MENTIONING "LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF . . . PALESTINIAN PEOPLE" TO BE DEALT WITH IN CONTEXT OF NEGOTIATIONS AMONG PARTIES. GONZALEZ PROTESTED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR GENEVE PARTIES ACCURATELY TO REPRESENT PALESTINIAN "NATIONAL" INTERESTS SECOND-HAND, WHILE CONCEDED THAT INDEED PLO CONTINUED TO REJECT RESES 242 AND 338. IN SC, ON THE OTHER HAND, AT LEAST ONE AUTHENTIC PALESTINIAN VOICE WOULD BE HEARD DIRECTLY (HE DID NOT, INCIDENTALLY, REGARD PLO PARTICIPATION AS DANGEROUS CONSTITUTIONAL PRECEDENT).

7. COMMENT: CONVERSATION OF COURSE TOOK PLACE BEFORE SC VOTE ON RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CREATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE AND, INDEED, BEFORE EITHER GONZALEZ OR EMBOFF WAS CLEAR ON JUST WHAT THAT RESOLUTION PROVIDED. GONZALEZ' IMPRESSIONS NEVERTHELESS WERE THAT DRAFT RESOLUTION REPRESENTED POSITIVE STEP ALONG LINES FAVORED BY MEXICO.

8. IT IS HARDLY SURPRISING THAT MEXICAN FOREIGN POLICY, NOW GUIDED BY FORMER GOM AMBASSADOR TO THE UN GARCIA ROBLES, SHOULD BE MORE FAVORABLE TO UNSC INVOLVEMENT IN MIDDLE EAST THAN WE WOULD LIKE OR MORE ACTIVIST THAN MEXICO HAS BEEN IN THE PAST. HOWEVER, MEXICO'S SUPPORT FOR AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE IS NOT NEW: MEXICO FIRST MADE ITS SHIFT IN THIS DIRECTION TWO YEARS AGO, WHEN LEBANON'S PRIME MINISTER NAFFAH VISITED HERE, AND SINCE THEN HAS CONSISTENTLY CALLED UPON ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM LANDS OCCUPIED DURING THE 1967 WAR. WHAT IS DIFFERENT IN THE PRESENT INSTANCE IS THE CARE WITH WHICH MEXICO IS APPROACHING THE MIDDLE EAST TANGLE. AFTER THE EMBARRASSING EXPERIENCES OF HIS PREDECESSOR OVER THE ZIONISM ISSUE, GARCIA ROBLES OBVIOUSLY WANTS TO ENSURE THAT HIS "EVENHANDED" POLICY IS SYSTEMATICALLY FORMULATED AND DOCUMENTED.

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